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General and complete disarmament

Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations regarding the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 67/41 and 67/58, which cover, respectively, the assistance provided to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The reporting period, from August 2012 to July 2013, saw the successful outcome of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, whose scope includes small arms and light weapons.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/41, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General and those States and organizations that were in a position to do so to continue to provide assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue to consider the matter and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. In its resolution 67/58, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", the General Assembly called upon all Member States to contribute towards the continued implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the national, regional and global levels. It encouraged States, relevant international and regional organizations and civil society with the capacity to do so to cooperate with and assist other States, upon request, in the preparation of comprehensive reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to the requests made by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned resolutions. In order to allow for a coherent approach to these overlapping and interconnected issues, the two resolutions are addressed together in this report, as has been the practice in the past.

II. Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them; and implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

A. United Nations system

1. Security Council

4. During the reporting period, the Security Council continued to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, particularly in the context of country situations and thematic areas such as women and peace and security, children and armed conflict, counter-terrorism, and drug trafficking and security.

5. In particular, the Security Council noted that States in several subregions of Africa are faced with such challenges as porous borders and the increasing illegal trafficking of arms.[1] The Council condemned the continuing illicit flow of weapons within and into countries in conflict.[2] For example, the Council encouraged the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enhance stockpile security, accountability and management of arms and ammunition, with the assistance of international partners as necessary and requested, and to urgently implement a national weapons marking

[1] See S/PRST/2013/5.

[2] See Security Council resolution 2078 (2012).

programme, in particular for State-owned firearms. The Council also called on all States to undertake measures to prevent the proliferation of arms in the Sahel region and urged Sahel and Maghreb States to increase cooperation in that regard.[3]

6. There were mixed results during the reporting period in the implementation of the arms embargo regimes in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Libya. Combatants continued to be able to enter an embargoed country with weapons and ammunition, and government stockpiles continued to be a significant source of ammunition for armed groups.[4] In Libya, most stockpiles remained under the control of non-State actors, while the State security sector, in particular with regard to border control management, continued to be rebuilt.[5]

7. Expert groups monitoring compliance with arms embargoes have called for enhanced cooperation and information-sharing between peacekeeping missions in different countries regarding possible arms embargo violations. They have also formulated recommendations regarding capacity-building on national border security, the marking of all arms under government control in accordance with relevant international and regional instruments, and strengthened programmes for the destruction of weapons and ammunition and the management of stockpiles in line with international standards.

2. General Assembly

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Outcome of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

8. The second United Nations conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons was held in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012. A sponsorship programme managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the participation of experts from 17 States who were otherwise unable to participate in the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which was held in New York from 19 to 23 March 2012, and in the Conference.

9. The Conference concluded successfully with the adoption, by consensus, of a final report to which substantive outcome documents were annexed: the 2012 Declaration; two Implementation Plans (2012-2018), for the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and a follow-up document that included agreement on a schedule of meetings for the period 2012-2018.[6]

10. In addition to the reaffirmation by Member States of their existing commitments, including with respect to bringing export legislation into line with

[3] See Security Council resolution 2056 (2012).
[4] See S/2012/843; S/2013/228, paras. 24 and 25; and S/2013/261, para. 27.
[5] See S/2013/99.
[6] See A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4.

standards, improving stockpile management, and marking weapons in government stockpiles, several new elements found their way into the outcome documents. These included:

(a) A reference to human rights, which heretofore had not been possible in the context of the United Nations small arms process;

(b) The acknowledgment that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to exacerbate armed violence;

(c) Recognition that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has devastating humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and undermines sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts;

(d) Encouragement of the further development of mechanisms to increase the measurability and effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance;

(e) Making better use in the United Nations process of the expertise of industry regarding technological developments;

(f) Encouraging regional organizations to align the timing of their regional meetings with the agreed global cycle of meetings.

11. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs sent a letter to regional organizations on 13 December 2012 informing them of actions they could undertake on the basis of the outcome of the Review Conference.

Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Firearms Protocol)

12. During the reporting period, the number of States parties to the Firearms Protocol increased to 97. In resolutions 5/4 and 6/2 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Conference requested the United Nations Conference on Drugs and Crime to conduct a study on the transnational nature of and routes used in the trafficking of firearms. Furthermore, the Office has initiated a pilot study that takes into consideration the links to other cross-border trafficking flows and possible connections to organized crime and terrorism. The findings of the study will enable States to devise more effective crime prevention and criminal justice responses to strengthen human security and prevent and combat illicit trafficking in firearms.

Arms Trade Treaty

13. On 2 April 2013, the Arms Trade Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly. The object of the Treaty is to establish the highest possible common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. Its scope includes small arms and light weapons as well as ammunition, parts and components. The Treaty was opened for signature on 3 June 2013.

14. In 2013, the United Nations launched the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, which is a flexible, results-focused facility supporting all aspects of the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, including small arms and ammunition controls. The Facility will also support projects focused on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent,

Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as determined by the yearly priorities set by the Facility.

15. With the financial support of donors, UNDP managed five sponsorship programmes for expert representatives from countries, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to facilitate their participation in the conferences leading up to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. In total, 83 delegates from 36 developing States in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, the Arab region and Latin America and the Caribbean were sponsored in attending the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the Treaty conferences, which were held in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

16. Since 2003, more than one half of the Member States reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms have included in their reports data on their international transfers of small arms and light weapons as a part of additional background information.

17. Over the past decade, a succession of Groups of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register have discussed the possibility of adding small arms and light weapons as a formal category under the Register. However, the 2013 Group was not able to reach consensus on this issue, which will be taken up again in the 2016 Group.

Activities by United Nations programmes and agencies

18. The Programme of Action Implementation Support System has continued to evolve as the "one-stop shop" for information on the implementation of the Programme of Action. It provides a platform for matching assistance needs with available resources for capacity-building in the area of small arms control and regulation. In 2012, 75 per cent of the States that submitted national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument utilized the online reporting tool or the reporting template,[7] both of which are available in the six official United Nations languages through the System.

19. Over the past year, the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism continued to promote coherence among the Organization's policies and activities in the area of small arms.[8] Importantly, principals of the mechanism endorsed the completed modules of the International Small Arms Control Standards, the international ammunition technical guidelines and the implementation programme for the guidelines (UN SaferGuard).

International Small Arms Control Standards

20. On 29 August 2012, on the margins of the second Small Arms Review Conference, the United Nations launched the International Small Arms Control Standards following an intensive development process involving partners worldwide. The standards fit within the framework created by existing global agreements on small arms and light weapons control (the Programme of Action, the

[7] Available for Member States at www.poa-iss.org/reporting.

[8] The mechanism provides coordination within the United Nations system on issues related to small arms, the arms trade and ammunition.

International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol) and build upon best practices developed at the regional and subregional levels.

21. The new standards were designed primarily to streamline policymaking, programming and practice on small arms and light weapons control across United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms agencies. They are expected to help ensure that the United Nations as a whole consistently delivers the highest-quality advice and support for the efforts of Member States to develop and maintain effective controls throughout the life cycle of small arms and light weapons. They are also expected to enhance the Organization's ability to "Deliver as one" on this important issue.

22. In 2012, United Nations entities have used the International Small Arms Control Standards to strengthen the support that they provide to Member States in such areas as stockpile management, conducting small arms surveys, marking and record-keeping, tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, the destruction of illicit and surplus arms, border controls and law enforcement cooperation. In addition, several regional organizations have used the Standards as a global reference point in revising or developing regional standards and guidelines on small arms control. Non-governmental organizations specializing in stockpile management and destruction assistance have also used the Standards.

23. The development of further International Small Arms Control Standards, including in the areas of legislative and regulatory controls, programme design and management and cross-cutting issues (related to women, gender, children, adolescents and youth), was begun during the reporting period. Moreover, an Inter-Agency Support Unit was created to promote and support the development and use of the Standards by the United Nations and its partners.

24. In order to support the practical application of the International Small Arms Control Standards, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research began developing a software tool that would allow users to apply them in the design, self-assessment, monitoring and evaluation of their small arms control programmes. During the reporting period, the software underwent a process of validation by way of field-testing for its utility and applicability in several States representing a range of capacity and geographic locations.

International ammunition technical guidelines

25. Much of the ammunition circulating among armed groups seems to have been diverted from government security forces, demonstrating the urgent need to better secure ammunition stockpiles. In addition, when they are placed in densely populated areas, stockpiles present a threat to civilian populations.

26. Effective stockpile safety management and security also have an important role in peacekeeping operations. Ammunition confiscated in the course of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, for example, require specialized handling and management in order to minimize the risk of explosions or rediversion for use in renewed hostilities.

27. During the reporting period, several tools were developed under the UN SaferGuard programme to assist States in ammunition stockpile management. These include a quick-response mechanism that allows for the rapid deployment of ammunition experts in response to requests from Member States for assistance in

securing ammunition stockpiles using the international ammunition technical guidelines; training materials on ammunition stockpile management for armed forces and law enforcement officials; and implementation software for the guidelines to facilitate risk assessments by national experts, including a tool for calculating required depot safety distances with the aid of an online satellite map.[9]

28. The United Nations Mine Action Service initiated the implementation of the international ammunition technical guidelines in several countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, on the basis of the guidelines, the Service supported national authorities in the development of national standards for ammunition storage, including the conduct of assessments of ammunition storage facilities, the disposal of non-serviceable ammunition, the refurbishment/rehabilitation of ammunition storage facilities and armouries, and the provision of training in ammunition safety management. Weapons and ammunition safety management programmes have also been successfully undertaken in Afghanistan, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and the Seychelles.

Group of States Interested in Practical Disarmament Measures

29. The New York-based Group of States Interested in Practical Disarmament Measures has been an informal forum of Member States with an open invitation to United Nations entities and civil society organizations. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/50, the Group supports the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and facilitates the exchange of views on issues related to the United Nations small arms process and the effective matching of needs and resources, in accordance with the outcome document of the second Small Arms Review Conference.

30. On the occasion of the second Review Conference, a portfolio on "Matching needs and resources 2012-2014" was presented at the meetings of the Group for consideration for funding. The portfolio featured 31 assistance proposals from 26 States. All requests were formulated on the basis of the needs indicated in the national reports submitted in 2012 and were fully endorsed by the respective national authorities. Since 2011, more than $2 million has been mobilized for small-arms-related international assistance through the efforts of the Group.

B. Selected activities undertaken at the regional and subregional levels

31. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime began implementing a global firearms programme in Latin America and West Africa, which is focused on:

(a) Raising awareness about and promoting of the ratification of the Firearms Protocol;

(b) Developing specialized tools;

(c) Providing legislative assistance to strengthen national legal and regulatory frameworks on firearms and to promote the regional harmonization of laws and practices;

[9] See www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Ammunition/IATG.

(d) Capacity-building and training in the areas of marking, record-keeping, transfer controls and the collection and destruction of firearms;

(e) Strengthening criminal justice responses with regard to the investigation and prosecution of firearms-related crimes;

(f) Promoting effective judicial cooperation and information exchange with a view to combating illicit firearms trafficking and related offences;

(g) Increasing knowledge of transnational firearms trafficking patterns.

32. In 2012, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided targeted legislative assistance and legal drafting support for the implementation of the Firearms Protocol to selected countries in South and Central America, South-Eastern Europe and West Africa, and promoted enhanced civil society participation in this process. In addition, the Office cooperated with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Common Market to organize two regional conferences on legislative harmonization. The conferences, which were held in Argentina in June 2012, and in Senegal in July 2012, with the participation of practitioners and civil society representatives from a total of 17 countries, resulted in the adoption of road maps for legislative review and in the amendment and adoption of new national legislation aimed at incorporating the obligations of the participating States under the Firearms Protocol and the relevant regional instruments. During the same period, the Office translated and disseminated the model law on firearms.

33. UNDP sought to ensure the linkage of small arms control with broader armed violence reduction programmes, including those aimed at establishing the rule of law and building better and stronger governance institutions. Support was provided for national efforts to strengthen institutional capacities to respond to crime and violence (police, justice, line ministries and local governments) and to tackle the challenges of small arms proliferation.

34. UNDP support included the provision of assistance to governments at all levels to increase citizen and community security. The Programme also worked directly with communities in order to understand their perceptions of the security challenges they face and to help them take practical action to address those challenges — for example, by establishing gun-free zones, keeping young people occupied and off the streets, improving job opportunities or improving street lighting.

Africa

35. In Libya, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked with partners to address armed violence through radio spots and talk shows, seeking to highlight the issue at the community level and focusing on risk awareness with regard to small arms and light weapons. In addition, workshops with media and journalists were organized in order to discuss the definition and impact of such weapons and reporting on their misuse. Billboards on the risks of celebratory shootings and the storage of small arms and light weapons at home, developed in partnership with local organizations, were erected in several cities.

36. In May 2012, UNDP and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur supported the Government of Sudan in the organization of a regional conference on the control of small arms and light weapons, which resulted in the

Khartoum Declaration, signed by the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and the Sudan. The Declaration provides for the establishment of a joint mechanism and executive secretariat for the implementation and monitoring of regional small arms control activities, including border control, between the signatory countries.

37. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNDP supported the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons through the collection of a total of 1,897 weapons and more than 300,000 rounds of ammunition and the marking of 3,000 police weapons. In Somalia, the Programme's work to reduce armed violence, part of a broader rule-of-law assistance effort, included strengthening the police, increasing access to justice and working with civil society to reduce armed violence.

38. In Burundi, UNDP supported the National Commission of Small Arms Control in linking its work with broader efforts to strengthen the capacity of institutions to deliver justice and security services, including community-oriented policing initiatives to reduce armed violence and improve community security. In the Sudan, support for small arms control was embedded into a broader disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

39. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provided support for the implementation of regional and subregional measures and agreements aimed at combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Centre developed training materials and provided training to defence and security sector forces in the following areas: small arms and light weapons control; practical disarmament measures; stockpile management and destruction; the appropriate use of force and weaponry during electoral periods; the role of civil society in practical disarmament; and research techniques on small arms and light weapons. The Centre, upon request, assisted African States in drafting and reviewing national action plans on small arms. In addition, the Centre undertook research on illicit trafficking, with a view to enhancing its ability to support the States of the region and provide tailored assistance activities.

40. The Accra-based Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre continued to provide training to government officials from ECOWAS States, particularly on stockpile management, marking, record-keeping, tracing and border security management.

Americas

41. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean carried out more than 70 assistance activities, including technical assistance aimed at improving the management of more than 80 weapons stockpiles. This assistance also led to the destruction of more than 40,000 surplus, obsolete and seized small arms and more than 40 tons of ammunition. In addition, the Centre trained more than 430 national security sector officers on small arms control issues, supported public policy dialogue on small arms control and legislative reform in 13 States, and undertook 10 legal comparative studies on small arms legislation. In keeping with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and General Assembly resolution 65/69, the Centre published *Forces of Change: Profiles of Latin American and Caribbean Women in*

Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms.[10] Furthermore, the Centre and UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Spain, trained 20 Latin American officials from armed forces, customs agencies, police forces and ministries of foreign affairs in operative controls with respect to transfers of arms and dual-use technologies.

42. In 2012, UNDP supported El Salvador in the implementation of comprehensive citizen security strategies, including gun-free zones and socioeconomic reintegration activities targeting youth and young gang members, which led to an average reduction in homicides of more than 40 per cent across 27 municipalities. In Honduras, UNDP supported the integration of armed violence reduction efforts into a broader national policy on citizen security and peaceful coexistence.

43. In Nicaragua, UNDP supported the efforts of the National Multidisciplinary Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons to improve its ability to control firearms. New prevention measures for firearms users have been adopted, including a ban on licences for persons with a history of domestic violence. This work has led to decreases in the use of firearms in crimes and in injury rates. By the end of the reporting period, 67 per cent of the weapons of private security companies and 20 per cent of civilian guns had been registered.

44. During the reporting period, the Americas and Caribbean Regional Office of UNICEF developed a multi-country initiative to address the high levels of armed violence and its impacts on children and adolescents in the region, taking an integrated rights-based approach to child-focused armed violence prevention and reduction. This included a focus on addressing the differential dimensions and impacts of armed violence based on age and gender. Building on previous experience with armed violence prevention and reduction in the region, the initiative continued to follow a three-pronged approach centred on: strengthening data and evidence on the impacts of armed violence on children and adolescents, including differential impacts on girls and boys of different ages; strengthening and integrating armed violence prevention and reduction into institutional systems and mechanisms for child protection; and support for community-based and child-centred armed violence prevention and reduction programmes. Acknowledging the reinforcing and intergenerational nature of various forms of violence (armed violence, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse of children, gender-based violence) in various environments (homes, communities, institutions), the Fund's armed violence prevention and reduction efforts were linked and integrated with wider efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children, including girls, as a group with specific vulnerabilities, and women.

Asia and the Pacific

45. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific continued to support national and regional discussions on combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular by organizing its two annual conferences on disarmament, non-proliferation and security issues (in Japan and the Republic of Korea). In Thailand, the Centre organized a national workshop aimed at enhancing the capacity of State agencies in the area of small arms control.

[10] Available at http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/ODAPublications/AdhocPublications/PDF/Forces_of_Change.pdf

The Centre also facilitated regional dialogue between States on the Arms Trade Treaty and provided the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with assistance on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

46. In Nepal, UNICEF continued supporting a surveillance system on armed violence that has been operational in all 75 districts of the country and that provides information on armed violence to governmental authorities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. The data provided evidence for the advocacy of armed violence reduction interventions in Nepal. Meanwhile, UNICEF, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and UNDP continued their collaborative work on armed violence reduction through the armed violence reduction working group established in 2010.

Other regions

47. During the reporting period, the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of UNDP, focused its efforts on the destruction of confiscated and surplus weapons and the upgrading of storage facilities. In Croatia and Serbia, the Clearinghouse assisted the Governments of those countries in the disposal of 16,329 and 17,000 weapons, respectively. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Clearinghouse assisted in improving security at four arms and ammunition storage facilities of the armed forces. Furthermore, the Clearinghouse continued to support and act as the secretariat for the regional information exchange process on arms exports. This informal platform for information exchange has contributed significantly to the enhancement of transparency and regional confidence-building and cooperation.

III. Observations and conclusions

48. Given the gravity of the consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their uncontrolled proliferation, the United Nations will continue to address this issue in a comprehensive and integrated manner. The renewed commitment of Member States to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as expressed during the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, has been encouraging. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty was a landmark achievement targeting the unregulated trade in small arms and light weapons. Given their synergetic relationship, the Arms Trade Treaty is expected to lend strong impetus to the implementation of the Programme of Action, the Firearms Protocol and the International Tracing Instrument.